REMARKS

Claims 1, 2, 5, 8, 9 and 12 have been amended. Applicant reserves the right to pursue the original claims and other claims in this application and other applications. Claims 1-15 are pending in this application.

Claims 2-5, 9, 10, 12 and 15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Claims 2, 5, 9 and 12 have been amended to address the Office Action's concerns. Applicants respectfully submit that all claims are in full compliance with 5 U.S.C. 112.

Claims 1-15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Barns-Slavin et al. (U.S. 5,072,397) in view of Raju et al. (U.S. 2003/0037008). Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

The present invention is directed to a method and system for processing one or more mail pieces to automatically associate a manually entered postage amount to a class of service and to a system which implements the method. Claim 1 as amended is directed to a method for processing one or more mail pieces that comprises "receiving a postage amount entered by a user, said postage amount to be applied to said one or more mail pieces; searching stored information including one or more rate tables for one or more classes of service having a postage rate that matches said postage amount; if no class of service having a postage rate that matches said postage amount is found, displaying an error message; if one or more classes of service having a postage rate that matches said postage amount is found, displaying said found one or more classes of service to said user; receiving a selected class of service, said selected class of service being selected by said user from said displayed one or more classes of service; applying said postage amount to said one or more mail pieces; and storing transaction information for each of said one or more mail pieces, said transaction information including said postage amount and said selected class of service."

Barns-Slavin, in contrast, is directed to a carrier management system that includes a scale for weighing parcels to be shipped, a computer connected to receive data from the scale related to the weight of the parcel, and a keyboard enabling operator input to the computer. The keyboard has a plurality of selection keys corresponding to carriers and classes. (Col. 1, lines 53-59). In operation, a parcel is placed on the scale and the user is prompted to enter an identification number of he parcel. Next the user is prompted to enter a carrier/class selection. In response thereto, the user depresses one of the keys of the keyboard to select the desired carrier and class of service. (Col. 4, line 61 to Col. 5, line 14). Based on the selection of the carrier and class made by the user, and the weight of the parcel from the scale, the system then calculates the rate for shipping the parcel. (See Col. 3, lines 20-42). Thus, the system in Barns-Slavin operates similarly to the conventional systems described in the Background portion of the Specification (Paragraph [0003]), in which a user weighs a mail piece, selects a class of service and the system determines the proper postage for the mail piece based on the measured weight and class of service. The system in Barns-Slavin does not receive a postage amount from the user; instead, it calculates the postage amount based on the weight, carrier and class selected by the user. The system in Barns-Slavin also does not search stored information including one or more rate tables for one or more classes of service having a postage rate that matches the postage amount. Instead, the system in Barns-Slavin receives a class of service selected by the user. The system in Barns-Slavin also does not, if no class of service having a postage rate that matches the postage amount is found, display an error message, or if one or more classes of service having a postage rate that matches the postage amount is found, display the found one or more classes of service to the user. The system in Barns-Slavin has a keyboard that the user must use to select a carrier and class of service.

The Office Action contends that Col. 2, lines 54-61 of Barns-Slavin discloses "searching stored information including one or more rate tables for one or more classes of service having a postage rate that matches said postage amount." Applicants respectfully disagree. Lines 54-65 of Col. 2 of Barns-Slavin state:

> FIG. 2 is a block diagram of the carrier management system of FIG. 1. The system incorporates a microcomputer including a microprocessor 20 having nonvolatile program memory 21 containing the program for operation of the system, and a nonvolatile database memory 22 having

> stored therein rate information of all carriers for which the system is expected to determine cost data. This latter memory is preferably replaceable in order to be able to update rate information, change or add carriers and/or classes of service, etc. A load cell 23 coupled to the platform applies data to the microprocessor related to the weight of a parcel on the platform.

There is no disclosure, teaching or suggestion in the above of searching stored information including one or more rate tables for one or more classes of service having a postage rate that matches said potage amount. The system in Barns-Slavin stores rate information in order to determine the appropriate rate based on the carrier and class selected by the user and the weight of the parcel.
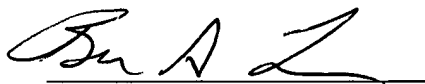
The reference to Raju et al. also does not overcome any of the above described deficiencies. Raju et al is directed to a system that allows a user to print a sheet of stamps having user selected values. The user is required to input a postage rate and a desired class that will be printed on each of the stamps. There is no disclosure, teaching or suggestion in Raju et al. of searching stored information including one or more rate tables for one or more classes of service having a postage rate that matches said postage amount; if no class of service having a postage rate that matches said postage amount is found, displaying an error emssage; if one or more classes of service having a postage rate that matches said postage amount is found, displaying said found one or more classes of service to said user."

For at least the above reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 1 is allowable over the prior art of record. Claims 2-7, dependent upon claim 1, are allowable along with claim 1 and on their own merits.

Claim 8 includes limitations substantially similar to those of claim 1. For the same reasons given above with respect to claim 1, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 8 is allowable over the prior art of record. Claims 9-15, dependent upon claim 8, are allowable along with claim 8 and on their own merits.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the claims of this case are in a condition for allowance and favorable action thereon is requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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